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# ES1: A Tool for Collecting Object-Oriented Design Metrics

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# ES1: A Tool for Collecting Object-Oriented Design Metrics

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**Abstract**

*There is considerable evidence that object-oriented design metrics can be used to make quality management decisions leading to substantial cost savings. However, one of the major impediments to the wider adoption of object-oriented metrics in practice has been the unavailability of robust and low-cost metrics analyzers. Commercial tools tend to collect basic size metrics and many variants of size metrics. Other potentially powerful coupling metrics are typically not collected. This report is the user manual for a publicly available open-source metrics analyzer for the C++ language. This analyzer collects a set of design metrics that have been empirically demonstrated to be beneficial for making quality management decisions in practice.*

# 1 Introduction

Recent evidence indicates that most faults in software applications are found in only a few of a system's components [6, 9-11]. The early identification of these components allows an organization to take mitigating actions, such as focus defect detection activities on high risk components, for example by optimally allocating testing resources [8], or redesigning components that are likely to cause field failures.

In the realm of object-oriented systems, one approach to identify faulty classes early in development is to construct prediction models using object-oriented design metrics. Such models are developed using historical data, and can then be applied for identifying potentially faulty-classes in future applications or future releases. The usage of design metrics allows the organization to take mitigating actions early and consequently avoid costly rework. Recent evidence suggests that taking such actions (in this case design inspections) can result in an estimated 42% saving in post-release costs for a Java application [7].

One of the difficulties in implementing quality management using object-oriented design metrics is that there have not been too many good tools available. A number of commercial tools collect the CK metrics suite [1] (for the tools, see [2]). However, doubt has been raised about the validity of these metrics and about the methodology used in previous studies that validated these metrics [5]. Therefore, there is a

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need for tools that implement other metrics that have been empirically validated in a methodologically sound manner.

This document describes a tool that can be used for collecting interface object-oriented metrics. This means that the metrics can be calculated from interface specifications, which are usually available at the design stage of a project. The current version of the tool works only with the C++ language. Which means that it can compute the metrics from the ".h" files. The metrics that are actually collected capture size, coupling, and inheritance. We only collect these metrics because previous research has indicated that they are good predictors of class fault-proneness [2-4, 7]. The metrics that are collected by the tool are summarized in Table 1.

Before proceeding further, it is important to realize that we are focusing only on metrics that were properly validated. That is why the tool does not collect all or many metrics that have been defined in the literature. As evidence accumulates demonstrating the efficacy of other metrics, they will certainly be included within our tool.

| Title | Description |
|---|---|
| **Coupling Metrics** | |
| OCAIC (instances) | Class-attribute import coupling (number of coupled attributes) |
| OCAIC (classes) | Class-attribute import coupling (number of coupled classes) |
| OCAEC (instances) | Class-attribute export coupling (number of coupled attributes) |
| OCAEC (classes) | Class-attribute export coupling (number of coupled classes) |
| OCMIC (instances) | Class-method import coupling (number of coupled method parameters and return types) |
| OCMIC (classes) | Class-method import coupling (number of coupled classes) |
| OCMEC (instances) | Class-method export coupling (number of coupled method parameters and return types) |
| OCMEC (classes) | Class-method export coupling (number of coupled classes) |
| ACAIC (instances) | Ancestor class-attribute import coupling (number of coupled attributes) |
| ACAIC (classes) | Ancestor class-attribute import coupling (number of coupled classes) |
| DCAEC (instances) | Descendant class-attribute export coupling (number of coupled attributes) |
| DCAEC (classes) | Descendant class-attribute export coupling (number of coupled classes) |
| ACMIC (instances) | Ancestor class-method import coupling (number of coupled method parameters and return types) |
| ACMIC (classes) | Ancestor class-method import coupling (number of coupled classes) |
| DCMEC (instances) | Descendant class-method export coupling (number of coupled method parameters and return types) |
| DCMEC (classes) | Descendant class-method export coupling (number of coupled classes) |
| **Inheritance Metrics** | |
| DIT | Depth of inheritance tree |
| **Size Metrics** | |
| Number of pub/priv/prot/all attributes | Number of attributes (depending on the access option : public, private, protected, all) |
| Number of pub/priv/prot/all methods | Number of methods (depending on the access option : public, private, protected, all) |
| LOC | Lines of Code (physical) |

**Table 1** Metrics collected by the ES1 tool.

## 1.1 Examples of Calculating the Metrics

Just to illustrate what the metrics mean, in this subsection we describe, using an example, a simple calculation of all of these metrics. From Table 1 we can see that there are three types of interactions between 2 classes : their relationship (whether it is a parent-child relationship or other), type of interaction (whether a class has an attribute, method parameter, or return type of another class) and locus of impact (whether a class is using another class through its attributes or method types – import – or it is used by another class - export). Letters in the acronyms stand for these 3 types of interactions : A for ancestor, D

for descendant, O for other (neither ancestor nor descendant), CA for class-attribute, CM for class-method, IC for import coupling and EC for export coupling.

Figure 1 shows a simple example of C++ code and how every type of coupling is captured.

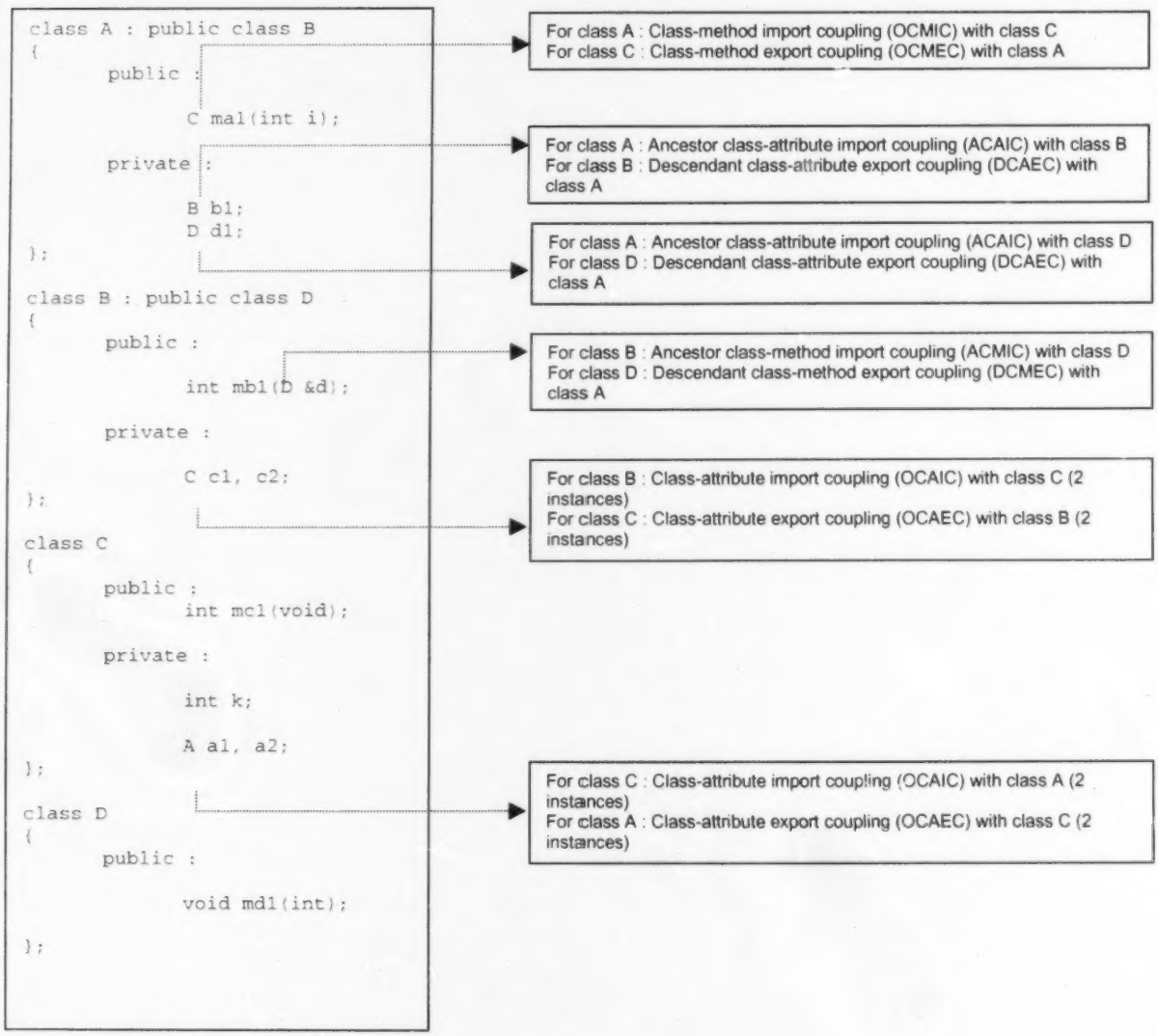

class A : public class B
{
public :
C ma1(int i);
private :
B b1;
D d1;
};
class B : public class D
{
public :
int mb1(D &d);
private :
C c1, c2;
};
class C
{
public :
int mc1(void);
private :
int k;
A a1, a2;
};
class D
{
public :
void md1(int);
};
For class A : Class-method import coupling (OCMIC) with class C
For class C : Class-method export coupling (OCMEC) with class A
For class A : Ancestor class-attribute import coupling (ACAIC) with class B
For class B : Descendant class-attribute export coupling (DCAEC) with class A
For class A : Ancestor class-attribute import coupling (ACAIC) with class D
For class D : Descendant class-attribute export coupling (DCAEC) with class A
For class B : Ancestor class-method import coupling (ACMIC) with class D
For class D : Descendant class-method export coupling (DCMEC) with class A
For class B : Class-attribute import coupling (OCAIC) with class C (2 instances)
For class C : Class-attribute export coupling (OCAEC) with class B (2 instances)
For class C : Class-attribute import coupling (OCAIC) with class A (2 instances)
For class A : Class-attribute export coupling (OCAEC) with class C (2 instances)

**Figure 1** A simple C++ example for calculating metrics. This type of class definition code is typically in the interface ".h" files.

If we consider all the access types (public and private, in this case), we can see that class B, for example, has two attributes which are both of type C. If we count coupling instances, then it means that OCAIC(B)=2. Class B has one method whose argument type is of type D. As class D is a parent class of class B, we are talking about ancestor coupling, i.e., ACMIC(B) = 1. Class B has only one parent, class D, so its DIT is 1 (the DIT of class A is 2, because it is a subclass of class B, which is a subclass of class D). Similarly we can calculate all the metrics for all the classes. At the end, we would obtain the results presented in Table 2.

| Metric | Class A | Class B | Class C | Class D | Class A | Class B | Class C | Class D |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| OCAIC (instances) | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| OCAIC (classes) | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| OCAEC (instances) | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| OCAEC (classes) | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| OCMIC (instances) | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| OCMIC (classes) | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| OCMEC (instances) | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| OCMEC (classes) | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| ACAIC (instances) | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ACAIC (classes) | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| DCAEC (instances) | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| DCAEC (classes) | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ACMIC (instances) | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| ACMIC (classes) | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| DCMEC (instances) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| DCMEC (classes) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Number of attributes | 2 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Number of methods | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| DIT | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| LOC | 11 | 10 | 11 | 7 | 11 | 10 | 11 | 7 |
| | **all attributes and methods** | | | | **only public attributes and methods** | | | |

**Table 2** Metrics as calculated for the sample code from Figure 1.

Note that the second part of the table shows metrics if only public attributes and methods are taken into account. We can see that there is less coupling, because all the attributes in the sample code in Figure 1 are private, so the coupling is related only to methods (which are all public in this case).

## 1.2 The ES1 Environment

The ES1 metrics analyzer has been implemented on top of the Source Navigator (SN) IDE. SN is a very powerful IDE by itself, especially for the purpose of going through large amounts of code trying to find cross-references and links amongst classes.

We will take a few moments here to explain the choice of using SN, and the advantages and disadvantages. SN is a product made available by RedHat under the GNU General Public License. You can download and install it right away from <http://sources.redhat.com/sourcenav/>. It has been around for a number of years and therefore it is stable and has a relatively large user community. SN extracts quite a number of relevant elements from the source code and stores them in databases, which we then use to compute the metrics. This is ideal since it is now possible, in principle, to compute the same metrics for other object-oriented programming languages. Furthermore, eventually the ES1 system and its successors will be integrated directly into SN so that metrics will be available as a user navigates through the code.

If you wish to use SN by itself (i.e., you are not interested in the ES1 system), you can download SN directly from the address above. However, if you wish to use ES1, you must use the version of SN bundled in the ES1 distribution as we have made some changes to SN. ES1 is based on SN version 4.52.

Currently, there is an SN verison 5.0 (just released a few weeks ago!). We have not completed evaluation of SN 5.0 with ES1. Therefore, we reiterate that you must use the SN system that is bundled with ES1.

# 2 Downloading and Installing ES1

The ES1 tool works only on **Linux RedHat 7.0**. We do not make any claims about its suitability or applicability under any other conditions.

To download and install ES1 follow these steps:

1. Download the file SN452_ES1_linux.tar.gz from the following location : <http://www.seg.iit.nrc.ca/~elemam> under the "Tools - Metrics" tab.
2. Save it in the directory where you want it installed.
3. Unpack the downloaded file. Type in the console window in the same directory :

```
tar xvfz SN452_ES1_linux.tar.gz
```

This will create the directory SN452_ES1_linux and all the subdirectories (Figure 2).

**Figure 2** The tar command to show the directories that are created when you unpack the ES1 file.

4. Change directory to SN452_ES1 by typing : `cd SN452_ES1_linux_unpacked`

5. Run INSTALL by typing : `./INSTALL` (see Figure 3)

**Figure 3** Running the installation command

6. The tool installation starts. It asks the user to accept the licence (Figure 4), and after that it prompts to accept or change the offered installation directory (Figure 5). Make sure you have write permission for that directory.

> **!** Don't choose for installation the directory `SN452_ES1_unpacked`.

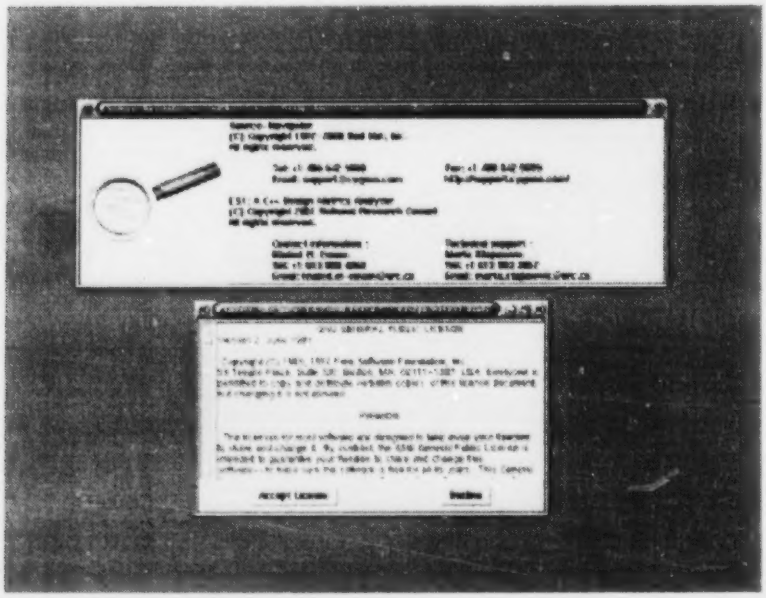


**Figure 4** The opening screen when installing ES1.

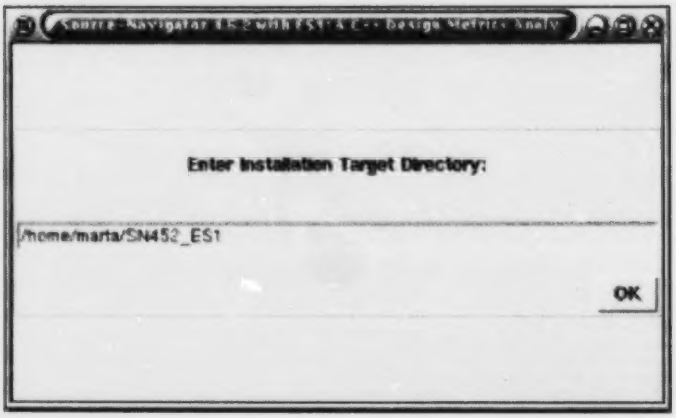



**Figure 5** The window where you will need to provide the installation directory.

7. The installation then continues and asks for the mail tool to use to send bugs. If you are not certain what to put leave it as is (default is mailhost).

8. The installation then prompts for the type of demo projects to install (see Figure 6). These are demo projects for Source Navigator, and it is up to you to make a choice. They are not essential for ES1 tool.

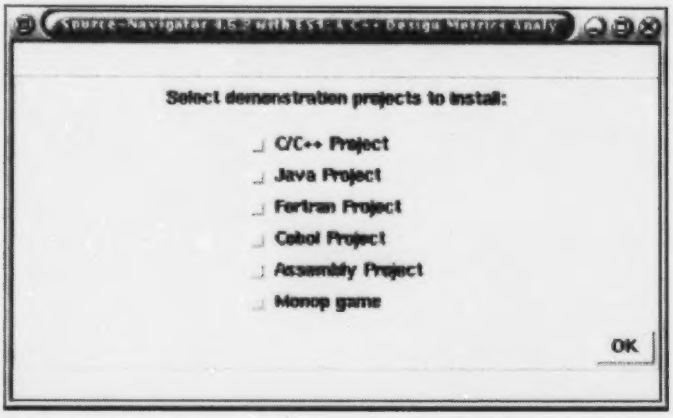



**Figure 6** The window where you can select demo projects for SN

9. The installation proceeds and shows a message to add the installation directory to the environment variable PATH when finished (Figure 7). If you want to have an easy access to the tool from any directory, it is useful to set PATH in the command line (Figure 8), or modify the startup file of your shell to add ES1 to your PATH. Setting PATH in the command line is local only to that terminal. If you want to set PATH to be the same for every terminal window, you should edit `.bashrc` file found in your home directory (using Emacs as editor, for instance) by adding the line which sets PATH (see Figure 9). The change will take effect with the next terminal opened.

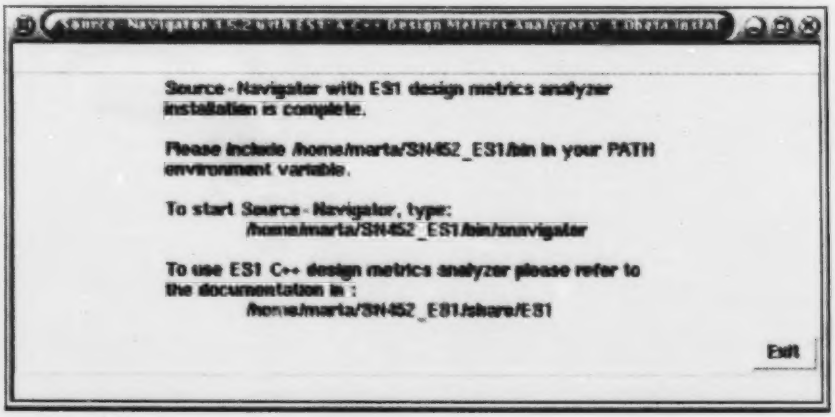

Source-Navigator with ES1 design metrics analyzer installation is complete.
Please include /home/marta/SN452_ES1/bin in your PATH environment variable.
To start Source-Navigator, type:
/home/marta/SN452_ES1/bin/snnavigator
To use ES1 C++ design metrics analyzer please refer to the documentation in :
/home/marta/SN452_ES1/share/ES1
Exit

**Figure 7** The screen informing the user to modify the PATH environment variable.

**Figure 8** Setting the PATH environment variable on the command line.

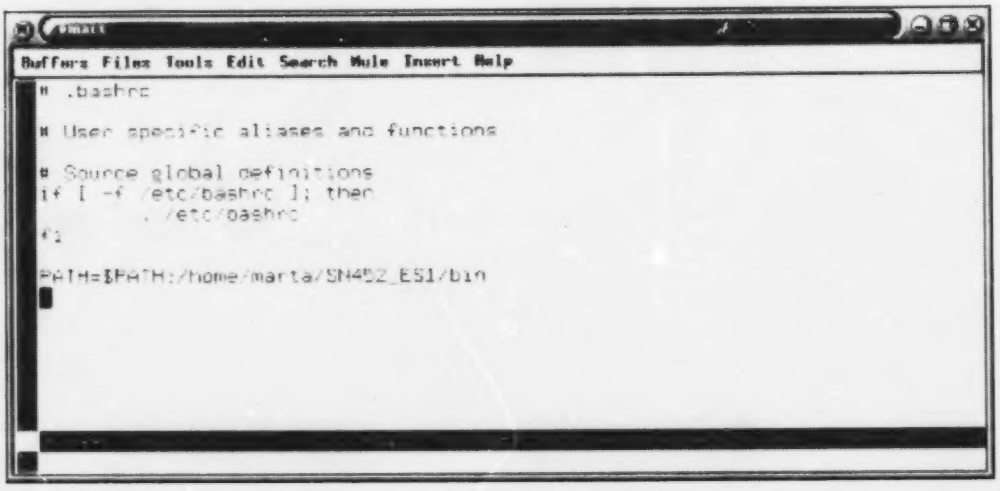



**Figure 9** Setting PATH in .bashrc file

10. Now both Source Navigator 4.52 and ES1 are installed and ready to use. Directory `SN452_ES1/bin` contains, among others, `snavigator` (the script for running Source-Navigator) and `ES1` (the script for running the design metrics analyzer). Figure 8 illustrates how SN is started using the `snavigator` script.

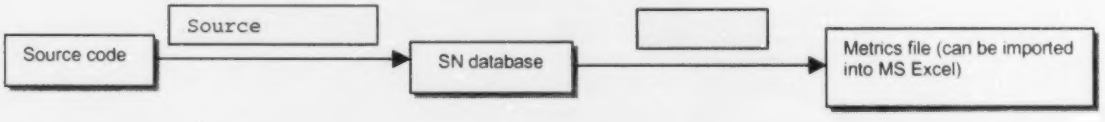
11. N.B. You can remove the directory `SN452_ES1_linux_unpacked` by typing :

```
rm -rf  SN452_ES1_linux_unpacked
```

in its parent directory. It is advised to keep the downloaded file (`SN452_ES1_linux.tar.gz`) for eventual future installations.

# 3 Example of Using ES1

ES1 is a Tcl script (see [12, 15]) that extracts information from database files produced by Source Navigator, calculates design metrics and outputs them in a file easily imported by MS Excel or Sun's StarCalc. It is therefore necessary to first create a Source Navigator project from the source C++ files we want to analyze, and then to run ES1. Note that only the `.h` files are required, so it does not matter if the `.cpp` files are not available. Here we explain in details how to use both tools.




The ES1 distribution comes with two example systems that can be used to get used to how ES1 works. They can be found in `SN452_ES1/share/ES1/examples` directory. One is smaller database library called MetaKit (for more information visit http://equi4.com/metakit/). It can be found in the subdirectory `SmallExample`. The other one is a more substantial system, a GUI framework called V (http://objectcentral.com/vgui/vrefman/install.htm). It can be found in the subdirectory `BigExample`. For both examples we extracted only *.h files from the source code, since our tool analyzes only header files. In the next chapter we show how to use ES1 on the second example.

## 3.1 Using Source Navigator

As noted earlier, SN is an open-source code navigation tool in which we incorporated our C++ design metrics analyzer. It is invoked from the command line by typing :

```
$home_directory/SN452_ES1/bin/snavigator
```

where `$home_directory` should be replaced with the real home directory of SN452_ES1. If the environment variable PATH is set, it can be invoked just by typing `snavigator` at the prompt.

Here we will explain how to make a Source Navigator project from the sample code included with the ES1 tool. We start with a number of `.h` files from the application called `v`.

1. Upon invoking Source Navigator for the first time it offers the user to create a new project or to find existing ones (Figure 10).

**Figure 10** The SN startup screen when there are no projects defined.

2. When the user clicks on the New Project button, a window pops up asking for a project name and source files destination. It offers a default project name and directory (Figure 11), but we will change it. We will call this project `v.proj`, put it in the `/home/stojanov` directory and use an example from `/SN452_ES1/share/ES1/examples/BigExample/v` directory (Figure 12).

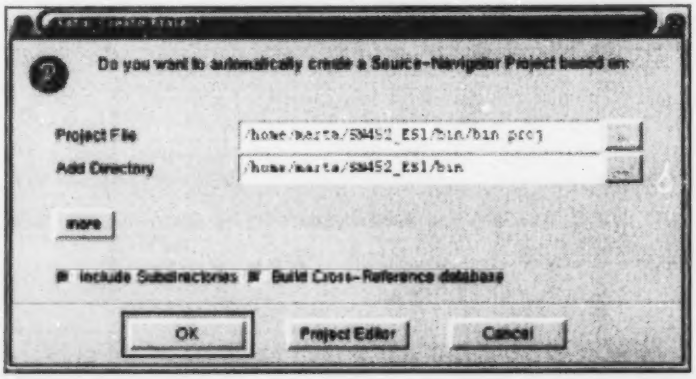



**Figure 11** The window where the specific details of a project are provided.

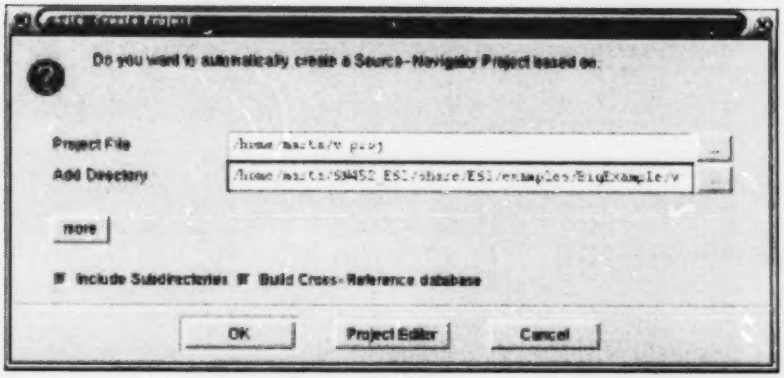



**Figure 12** Window when the default project specifics are edited.

3. After clicking on OK, Source Navigator starts parsing the project files and at the end pops up a window with the information on all files (Figure 13).

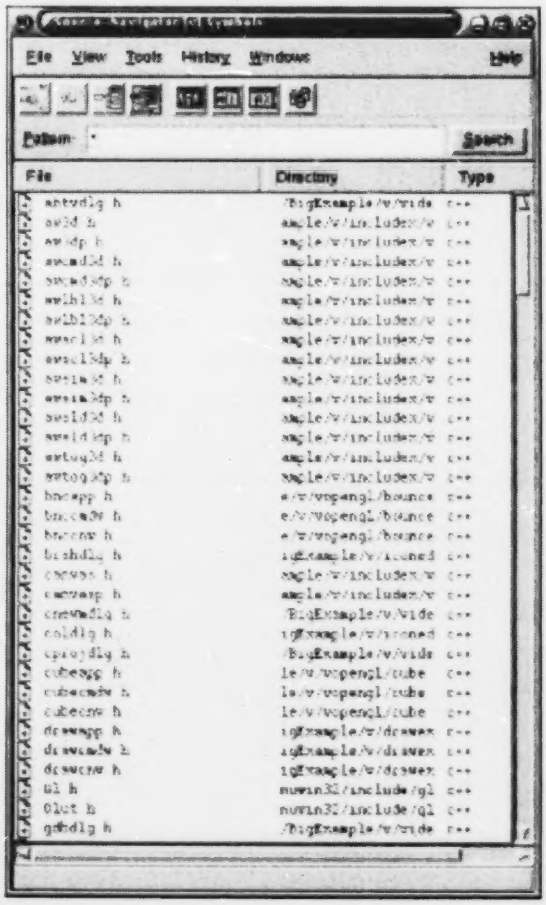



**Figure 13:** The SN window with all the files in the project.

4. Now we have created a SN project. By doing so SN has created a number of databases that we use for the purpose of calculating design metrics. Here we can close Source Navigator windows. Of course, it is an excellent code navigation tool and we encourage the user to use it as such. For more information on how to use Source Navigator, see :

<http://sources.redhat.com/sourcenav/online-docs/userguide/index_ug.html>.

5. By parsing C++ source files, SN created the database files that are put by default in the $project_home_directory/.snprj directory (Figure 14).

**Figure 14** A listing of the database files that are generated by SN.

Some of the database files are used by ES1 to extract all the needed information for calculating metrics. Each file is a table that contains specific symbol information. A list of the database files used, along with a short explanation of their content is given in Table 3.

| File Suffix | Table Description | Record Format |
|---|---|---|
| cl | Classes | name?start_position?filename;end_position?attributes?{}?{class template}?{}?{comment} |
| in | Inheritances | class?base-class?start_position?filename;end_position?attributes?{}?{class template}?{inheritance?template}?{comment} |
| iu | Include | included_file?start_position?include_from_file;0.0?0x0?{}?{}?{}?{} |
| iv | Instance variables | class?variable-name?start_position?filename;end_position?attributes?{type}?{}?{}?{comment} |
| ma | Macros | name?start_position?filename;end_position?attributes?{}?{}?{}?{comment} |
| md | Method definitions | class?name?start_position?filename;end_position?attributes?{ret_type}?{arg_types}?{arg_names}?{comment} |
| t | Typedefs | name?position?filename;attributes?{original}?{}?{comment} |
| un | Unions | name?position?filename;attributes?{}?{}?{comment} |

**Table 3** List of SN database files used as inputs for ES1.

Source Navigator comes with a Tcl interpreter called `hyper`, which contains the Tcl commands needed to manipulate the project database. ES1 is implemented entirely in Tcl, using SN Tcl commands for fetching tables from the database and standard Tcl commands for extracting the information from them [12, 15].

## 3.2 Using ES1

Now that a Source Navigator project is created, along with the database files we can invoke ES1. Currently, it works only from the command line.

1. ES1 is invoked in a similar way as Source Navigator, but with arguments. Type :

```
$home_directory/SN452_ES1/bin/ES1 projdir projname
```

where `$home_directory` should be replaced with the real home directory of SN452_ES1.
Command line arguments are :

projdir : the directory of the .proj file.

projname : project name (without .proj)

acces_option : can be `-priv`, `-prot`, `-pub` or `-all`, depending on whether we want to analyze private, protected, public or all variables and methods

-myhelp : prints help message (Figure 15).

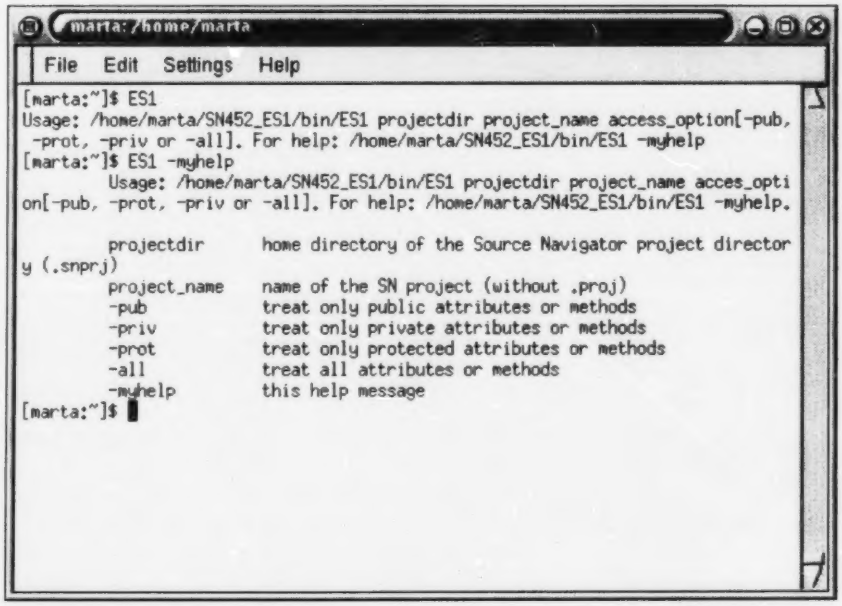

marta:/home/marta
File Edit Settings Help
[marta:~]$ ES1
Usage: /home/marta/SN452_ES1/bin/ES1 projectdir project_name access_option[-pub, -prot, -priv or -all]. For help: /home/marta/SN452_ES1/bin/ES1 -myhelp
[marta:~]$ ES1 -myhelp
Usage: /home/marta/SN452_ES1/bin/ES1 projectdir project_name acces_option[-pub, -prot, -priv or -all]. For help: /home/marta/SN452_ES1/bin/ES1 -myhelp.
projectdir home directory of the Source Navigator project directory (.snprj)
project_name name of the SN project (without .proj)
-pub treat only public attributes or methods
-priv treat only private attributes or methods
-prot treat only protected attributes or methods
-all treat all attributes or methods
-myhelp this help message
[marta:~]$

**Figure 15** Example with ES1 giving the usage and help outputs when invoked.

2. For our example (v.proj) we should type (if PATH is set) :

```
ES1 /home/marta v -all
```

If PATH is not set it should be :

```
$home_directory/SN452_ES1/bin/ES1 /home/marta v -all
```

Upon pressing ENTER, the metrics extraction starts. Messages are displayed while waiting (Figure 16). For large projects it can take some time. For example, analyzing the v project on Pentium II 400MHz 128MB RAM takes about 2 minutes.

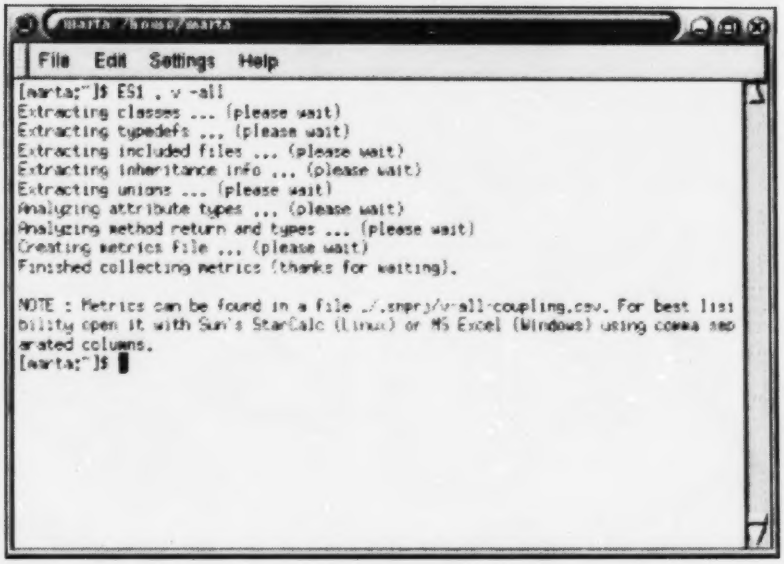

File Edit Settings Help
[marta:~]$ ES1 . v -all
Extracting classes ... (please wait)
Extracting typedefs ... (please wait)
Extracting included files ... (please wait)
Extracting inheritance info ... (please wait)
Extracting unions ... (please wait)
Analyzing attribute types ... (please wait)
Analyzing method return and types ... (please wait)
Creating metrics file ... (please wait)
Finished collecting metrics (thanks for waiting).
NOTE : Metrics can be found in a file ./.snprj/v-all-coupling.csv. For best lisi
bility open it with Sun's StarCalc (Linux) or MS Excel (Windows) using comma sep
arated columns.
[marta:~]$

**Figure 16** The notification messages provided by ES1 while it is executing.

3. When the execution is finished, two new files will appear in `./snprj` directory : `v-all-coupling.csv` and `v_coupling.log`. The first file contains calculated metrics, and the second one log messages (like whether a database file was missing, for example) (Figure 17).

**Figure 17 :** After extracting the metrics, two additional files are created.

4. *Finally, we should use MS Excel or Sun's StarCalc to* visualize the metrics file. Use comma separated columns when importing the file, if it is not imported automatically (Figure 18).

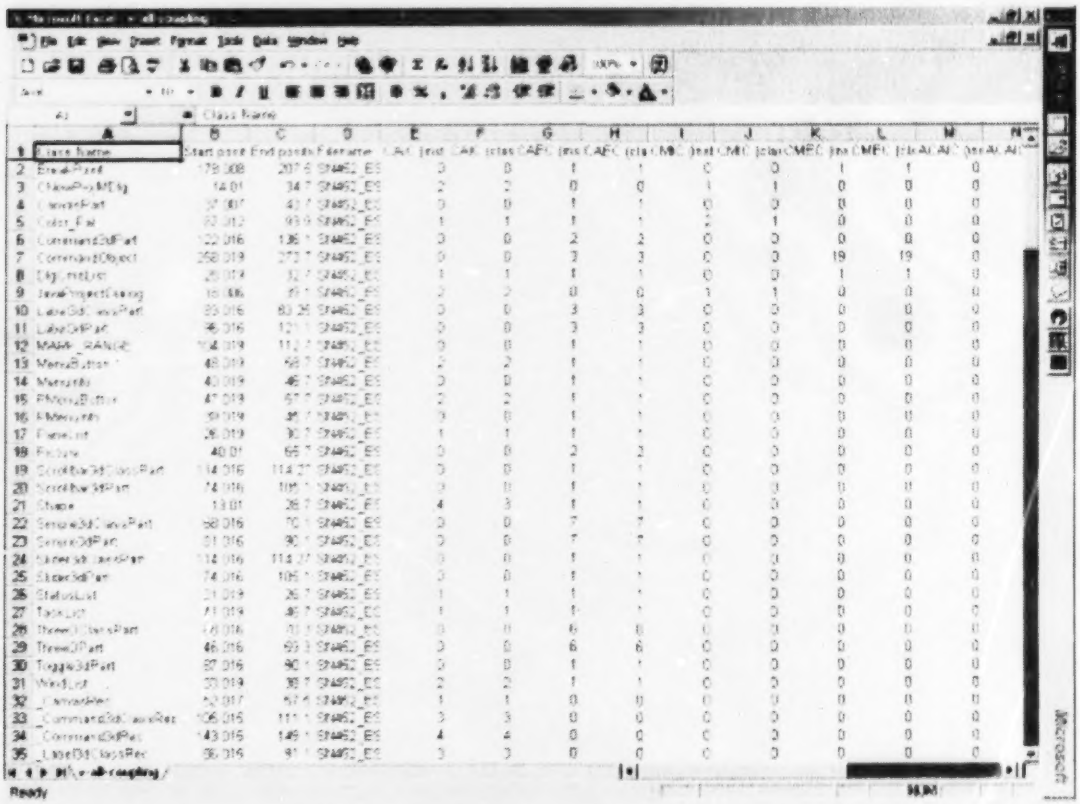


**Figure 18** Example of what you should see when opening the .csv file in MS Excel.

Note that first two columns after the class name give start and end position of the class : first number before dot is line number, and the second one is the position of the character on that line. The format is taken directly from Source Navigator. It is important to have position in order to distinguish between classes with the same name.

# 4 Special Cases

ES1 works only on C++ code, but not all the subtleties of the C++ language are covered. This is partially because Source Navigator's parser does not provide enough information, or because it has been left for future development by us. In this section we will explain the limitations of ES1. In addition, some cases demand more explanations on how the coupling is measured because there were implementation choices

that had to be made. Most of the examples are taken from the ACE (Adaptive Communications Environment) library [13, 14].

It should be noted that, based on our experiences extracting metrics from a number of different systems, the limitations of ES1 are minor given that they deal with some cases that do not occur very often (at least in the systems that we have studied thus far). Furthermore, in practice, the extracted metrics are used as part of statistical analyses. The choices we made (explained below) will usually not have a noticeable influence on the results of the statistical analyses.

## 4.1 Method pointers

Method pointers are not parsed well by Source Navigator. In the case showed in Figure 19, method pointer ACE_QOS_CONDITION_FUNC would be presented in the database as int(*)(), i.e. only the return type (`int`) will be present in the database, whereas method argument types will be omitted

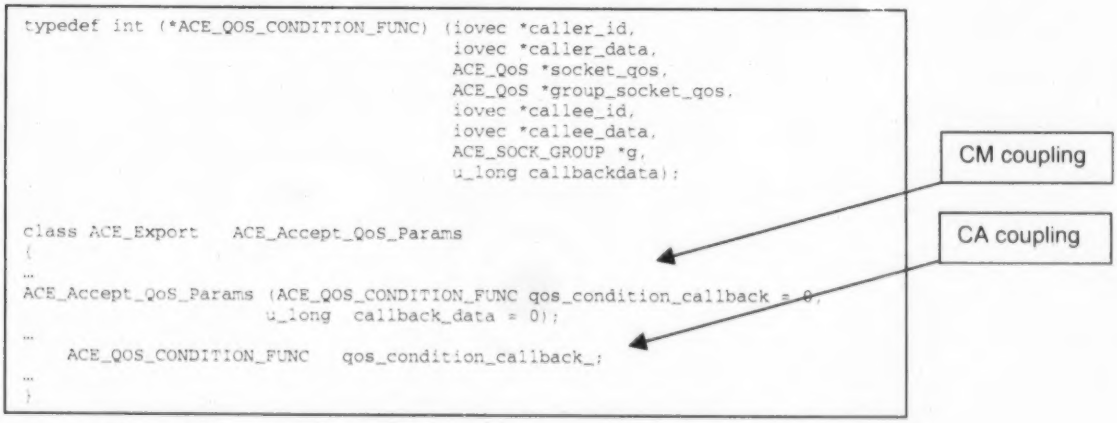



**Figure 19** Example of a method pointer to illustrate its impact on computed metrics.

(`iovec`, `AC_QoS`, `ACE_SOCK_GROUP`, `u_long`). So, we had no choice (without changing the parser) than to limit coupling measurements involving method pointers to their return types.

The question is how to consider coupling with method pointers: as class-attribute or class-method coupling ? We decided to treat it as class-attribute coupling if a method pointer is used as an attribute, and as class-method coupling if it is used as a method's return type, or as a method's argument.

In fact, in the above case, there will be no coupling, because the method pointer's return type is `int`. If the method pointer's arguments were in the database, there would be coupling between `ACE_Accept_QoS_Params` and method pointer's argument class types (`iovec` and `ACE_QoS`).

## 4.2 Macros

### 4.2.1 Macro definitions

Source Navigator does not pre-process the code, so we did not treat macro definitions even if they can introduce coupling. Figure 20 shows an example of such non-treated coupling. The advantage of not performing any pre-processing is that SN can be very robust compared to other C++ metrics analyzers that we have worked with. For instance, we have been able to start ES1 collecting metrics from systems within 5 minutes of installation. For other metrics analyzers we sometimes had to spend a few months setting up the environment before metrics could be computed.

```
# if defined (ACE_HAS_TEMPLATE_TYPEDEFS)
…
    # define ACE_MMAP_MEMORY_POOL ACE_MMAP_Memory_Pool
…

# else
…
    # define ACE_MMAP_MEMORY_POOL ACE_MMAP_Memory_Pool, ACE_MMAP_Memory_Pool_Option
…
# endif

class ACE_Export ACE_MEM_SAP
{
    #if (ACE_HAS_POSITION_INDEPENDENT_POINTERS == 1)

       typedef ACE_Malloc_T<ACE_MMAP_MEMORY_POOL, ACE_Process_Mutex, ACE_PI_Control_Block>
MALLOC_TYPE;

    #else

       typedef ACE_Malloc_T<ACE_MMAP_MEMORY_POOL, ACE_Process_Mutex, ACE_Control_Block>
MALLOC_TYPE;

    #endif
…
    MALLOC_TYPE *shm_malloc_;
}
```

**Figure 20** Example of macro definitions.

In this case our tool will find class-attribute coupling between ACE_MEM_SAP and ACE_Process_Mutex, ACE_PI_Control_Block and ACE_PI_Control_Block, but not with ACE_MMAP_Memory_Pool and ACE_MMAP_Memory_Pool_Option (macro ACE_MMAP_MEMORY_POOL is not treated).

### 4.2.2 Macro if-else statements

Macro if-else statements pose a different problem. If definitions are protected by macro statements, there can be more than one typedef or class with the same name in the same file. Preprocessing would certainly remove this ambiguity, but when trying to use unprocessed code, one would have to check both definitions. For this reason, we treat them as distinct couplings. Figure 21 shows such a case. Here our tool would find class-attribute coupling between `ACE_ATM_Acceptor` and both `ACE_SOCK_Acceptor` and

`ACE_TLI_Acceptor`. Furthermore, from a cognitive perspective (see [7] for a detailed cognitive model justifying the object-oriented computed by ES1), someone comprehending the code will likely trace through the links to other classes for all parts of a guarded `#ifdef`.

```
#if defined (ACE_HAS_FORE_ATM_WS2)

    #include "SOCK_Acceptor.h"
    typedef ACE_SOCK_Acceptor ATM_Acceptor;

#elif defined (ACE_HAS_FORE_ATM_XTI)

    #include "TLI_Acceptor.h"
    typedef ACE_TLI_Acceptor ATM_Acceptor;

#endif

...

class ACE_Export ACE_ATM_Acceptor
{
...
```

**Figure 21** Example of macro if-else statements.

## 4.3 Templates

Template classes are treated as any other class for import and export coupling between themselves and other classes. But, template arguments pose a problem : a template class can have an attribute (or method argument or return type) whose type is of template argument's type. If that template argument is of class type, there should be coupling between these two classes. The problem is that we cannot know the exact type of template argument until that template class is used, and template arguments are set with real types. So, in order to measure this kind of coupling, we have to find every single usage of that particular class (in attributes or in methods) and to associate template arguments with all the types they can possibly have. Figure 22 illustrates this case.

```
template <ACE_MEM_POOL_1, class ACE_LOCK>
class ACE_Local_Name_Space : public ACE_Name_Space
{

...

typedef ACE_Allocator_Adapter <ACE_Malloc <ACE_MEM_POOL_2, ACE_LOCK> >
ALLOCATOR;

...

ACE_Name_Space_Map <ALLOCATOR> *name_space_map_;

...
}


template <class ALLOCATOR>
class ACE_Name_Space_Map : public MAP_MANAGER
{

public:
ACE_Name_Space_Map (ALLOCATOR *alloc);

...

}
```

**Figure 22** Example of template class usage.

As we can see in Figure 22, class `ACE_Name_Space_Map` has a method argument of type `ALLOCATOR`, which is its template argument type. To calculate coupling we have to know the exact type of `ALLOCATOR`. Therefore, we have to look for uses of that class. One of them is in the class `ACE_Local_Name_Space` that has an attribute of the type `ACE_Name_Space_Map <ALLOCATOR>`, where `ALLOCATOR` is in fact `ACE_Allocator_Adapter <ACE_Malloc <ACE_MEM_POOL_2, ACE_LOCK> >`. Now we can say that the class `ACE_Name_Space_Map` is coupled to `ACE_Allocator_Adapter` and `ACE_Malloc`, as well as with types of `ACE_MEM_POOL_2` (macro, not treated) `and ACE_LOCK` (template argument, whose type will be found in a similar way).

It is obvious that we can only consider coupling between template classes and template arguments after the whole code is processed and every single usage of each template class is found. Template arguments can be of template class' parent type : we check for it when we find that there is coupling, in order to treat it as ancestor-descendant coupling.

Template structures are not parsed in Source Navigator and therefore, are not considered by our tool. In the following case :

```
template <class T>
struct conj_func
{
  T x;
}
```

The ES1 tool will not see coupling between `conj_func` and template argument `T`, but the struct itself will be considered for coupling (i.e., only template arguments will not be).

## 4.4 Forward declarations

If a class is not in the scope of our class, it can still be used for attribute and method types using forward declaration :

```
class A
{
  class B;
  B b;
}
```

We will consider class-attribute coupling between class A and class B, if class B is defined somewhere in the code, i.e., if it can be found in the class database. If not (which can be the case, if B is supposed to be defined in some `.cpp` file), we do not consider this as a coupling. The reason is simple: we do not have any other way to prove that B is a class other than to look for it in the class database.

In some cases the system is a library and the declared classes will be defined in applications that use the library. For such cases, it is not possible to account for any coupling.

## 4.5 Inner classes

As metrics are usually not calculated for inner classes, we do not consider inner classes in our coupling measurements. But as the parser does not distinguish inner classes from others, we have to explicitly check for them. Figure 23 shows an example of an inner class and its interaction with other classes. If an inner class has an attribute or method type of some other class, we consider that there is coupling between its outmost class and that class (in our example class A is coupled with class C, because of the attribute c in the inner class B). If an outer class has an attribute or method type of an inner class, there is no coupling between them (no coupling between class A and class B because of the attribute b). If a class is coupled to an inner class of some other class, only coupling with the outer class is considered (class C is coupled only with the class A, and not with the inner class B, because of the attribute ab).

```
class A
{
   class B;

   B b;

   class B
   {
     A a;
     C c;
   }
}


class C
{
   A::B ab;
}
```

**Figure 23** Example of an inner class.

## 4.6 Parent classes

The simplest case of ancestor-descendant coupling would be if an attribute or method type is of the parent's class. But there is another case which is also considered as ancestor-descendant coupling. If, for instance, an attribute or method type is a `typedef` defined in a parent class, we consider it as ancestor-descendants coupling even if the `typedef` turns out to be a primitive type. The reason is that in such a case, when trying to understand the code, we will have to look into the parent class to resolve the typedef.

## 4.7 Complex types

We call complex types of the form : X::Y. X can be either a class or a `typedef` (in which case its redefined type is found). Y can be either an inner class (in which case we consider only coupling with X and not Y) or a `typedef` defined in the class X or its parent class, in which case an effort is made to find a type redefined by that `typedef` (if it is of a class type, we consider it as coupling).

In the case of templates we could have the following case:

```
template <class A>
class B
{
  A::C x;
}
```

In this case we consider coupling between class B and a class that can be a type of the template argument A. But we do not go further : we do not test if that class has a field of the name C (inner class or `typedef`). Eventually, it could be done, but as we did not encounter such cases in a number of large systems that we analyzed, we left it unconsidered.

## 4.8 Unions

Unions are not considered as base classes, but we treat them as such and consider that there is coupling between a union and its elements, if they are of a class type (as we do for structures).

## 4.9 Namespace keyword

Source Navigator does not support C++ keyword `namespace`. This leads to scoping problems which cannot be resolved if `namespace` support is not added. Right now, the scope of a class is the file in which that class is defined and all the files included by that file. The `namespace` keyword does not require file inclusion : a type defined in the same namespace can be in a file not included by our class' file, and still be visible by our class. If we decide not to define the scope as we did, and to consider all project files, we can have an error in scope when namespace is not used. So, for now, until the C++ parser is changed, it is not advised to use this tool for C++ code that contains namespaces.

Even when namespaces are in the same file, classes are not seen by SN if they are declared out of the namespace (in the example below, class A is declared as `N::A`, because it is part of namespace N). In this case SN will find only class B, and not class A, which again can lead to erroneous metrics.

```
namespace N
{
   class A;
}

class N::A
{
};

namespace M
{
   class B
   {
   };
}
```

### 4.10 Other keywords

The keyword `typename` is not supported by Source Navigator, and our tool simply ignores it (like it ignores keywords virtual and inline and primitive types). It treats everything as possible types, so it should not be an issue.

# 5 Software License

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